

Message Text

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7403

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 2809

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT PINS LA

SUBJECT: VIENTIANE OBSERVES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF LAO PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (PDR)

SUMMARY: LPDR MARKED FIRST ANNIVERSARY ITS FOUNDATION
WITH SPEECHES BY PRESIDENT SOUPHANOUVONG, SECRETARY
GENERAL/PRIME MINISTER KAYSONE AND FOREIGN MINISTER
PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, A LARGE BUFFET SUPPER AND A PARADE.
CELEBRATION ARRANGEMENTS REFLECTED MARKED PREOCCUPATION
WITH SECURITY AS WELL AS A HIGH DEGREE OF PARTY AND
GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION IN THE CITY OF VIENTIANE. NONE
OF THE SPEECHES BROKE ANY NEW GROUND AND NONE SINGLED
OUT THE UNITED STATES FOR ATTACK. END SUMMARY.

1. LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR)

COMMEMORATED FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION WITH
CEREMONIES ORGANIZED WITH GREAT ATTENTION TO SECURITY.

LPDR NOT ONLY CARRIED OUT ARRESTS AMONG GENERAL POPU-
LATION BUT PICKED UP LOCAL EMPLOYEES OF VARIOUS FOREIGN

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NON-COMMUNIST REPRESENTATIONS, AS WE HAVE REPORTED

SEPARATELY. THERE WAS GREAT SECRECY ABOUT THE OPENING CEREMONY PRESIDED OVER BY PRESIDENT SOUPHANOUVONG AND PRIME MINISTER/SECRETARY GENERAL KAYSONE. THERE WERE THREE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CELEBRATION:

A. SPEECHES BY SOUPHANOUVONG AND KAYSONE TO PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 1;

B. A LARGE BUFFET SUPPER BY FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH AT THE GOLDEN HOUSE (FORMER ROYAL PALACE) FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INCLUDING DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON EVENING OF DECEMBER 1; AND

C. A PARADE IN THE EARLY MORNING OF DECEMBER 2 AT THE THAT LUANG ESPLANADE.

2. INVITATIONS FOR THE FIRST CEREMONY WERE DISTRIBUTED TO DIPLOMATIC CORPS AT ABOUT NOON DECEMBER 1, TWO AND A HALF HOURS BEFORE CEREMONY WAS SCHEDULED TO START. CHIEFS OF MISSION WERE INVITED TO PHONE KHENG CAMP (DEFENSE MINISTRY). HOWEVER, THIS WAS A DECEPTION PLAN OBVIOUSLY EXECUTED FOR SECURITY REASONS. FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INCLUDING COMMUNIST MEMBERS, HAD ASSEMBLED AT PHONE KHENG, AN INFORMATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL APOLOGIZED FOR TRANSFER OF CEREMONY TO ANOTHER LOCATION AND ASKED ALL PRESENT TO GO TO KILOMETER 6, THE FORMER AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND WHERE KAYSONE AND OTHER KEY FIGURES OF THE REGIME RESIDE.

3. ON ARRIVAL AT KILOMETER 6 DIPLOMATS WERE SHOWN INTO THE GYMNASIUM, THE FORMER AMERICAN SCHOOL, WHERE SEVERAL HUNDRED LAO GREATER AND LESSER DIGNITARIES, PHOTOGRAPHERS AND JOURNALISTS HAD ALREADY ASSEMBLED. AUTOMOBILES BEARING LICENSE NUMBERS IN SERIES RESERVED FOR COMMUNIST BLOCK EMBASSIES WERE ALREADY ON THE SCENE, INDICATING THAT THEY AT LEAST HAD RECEIVED ADVANCE NOTICE. SEVERAL TRUCKLOADS OF ARMED TROOPS WERE ON

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HAND.

4. SOUPHANOUVONG SPOKE FOR TEN MINUTES AND THEN KAYSONE GAVE THE MAIN ORATION, WHICH LASTED FOR FORTY MINUTES. AS NEARLY AS I COULD TELL FROM THE LAO/FRENCH INTERPRETATION PROVIDED THE NEW MONGOLIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO WAS SEATED NEXT TO ME, THERE WERE NO SURPRISES. (WE SHALL CHECK FBIS AND OTHER SOURCES.) I GOT

IMPRESSION KAYSONE MADE USUAL STATEMENTS ABOUT DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES AND USUAL EXPRESSIONS OF DISAPPOINTMENT THAT UNITED STATES WAS NOT CONTRIBUTING TO BINDING UP WOUNDS OF WAR AND ALSO CONTINUING TO SUPPORT ANTI-LPDR ACTIVITIES OF LAO REACTIONARIES. SOUPHANOUVONG CLAUSED THE CEREMONY WITH A FEW REMARKS.

5. SEATED AT CENTER OF STAGE WERE KAYSONE WITH SOUPHANOUVONG AT HIS LEFT. READING RIGHT FROM KAYSONE WERE FIVE OTHERS WHOM I WOULD DESCRIBE AS PARTY TYPES: NOUHAK, PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, KHAMTAY SIPHANDONE, PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE SSMREME PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SISOMPHONE LOVANGSAY. READING LEFT FROM SOUPHANOUVONG WERE SOUVANNA PHOUMA, SITHONE KOMMADAM, FAYDANG LOBLIAYAO, KHAMSOUK KEOLA, AND MADAME KHAMPHENG BOUPHA. CONSPICUOUSLY DISPLAYED ON THE STAGE WERE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE "FOUR HEROES", SOUPHANOUVONG, KAYSONE, SITHONE KOMMADAM, AND FAYDANG LOBLIAYAO.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 2809

6. A VERY BRIEF AUSTERE VIN D'HONNEUR FOLLOWED. SOUPHANOUVONG, KAYSONE, NOUHAK, PHOUMI VONGVICHIT,

PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, KHAMTAY SIPHANDONE AND VARIOUS LESSER LIGHTS GREETED ME (AND EVERYBODY ELSE) IN FRIENDLY FASHION.

7. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ANYONE FROM THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY HAD BEEN INSIDE KILOMETER 6 SINCE THE EVENTS OF THE SUMMER OF 1975. IT APPEARED TO BE WELL POPULATED AND ONLY MODERATELY RUN DOWN. SIGNS STILL READ: "SECOND STREET", "BOYS' LOCKERS", "20 MILES PER HOURS" AND "SLOW - SCHOOL".

8. THE BUFFET DINNER AT THE GOLDEN HOUSE WAS PRESIDED OVER BY PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, WHO MADE A ROUTINE SPEECH STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF DECEMBER 2 IN THE HISTORY OF THE LAO NATION AND THE MULTINATIONAL CHARACTER OF THAT NATIONS. HE ALSO CITED THE UNITY OF THE BROTHER PEOPLES OF LAOS, VIETNAM AND KAMPUCHEA. HE MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES.

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9. THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ASSEMBLED AT 5:30 A.M. ON DECEMBER 2 FOR THE PARADE WHICH FOLLOWED SPEECHES BY PHAO PHIMPACHANH, PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PREFECTURE OF VIENTIANE AND MEUNE SOMVICHIT, PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROVINCE OF VIENTIANE. NEITHER OF THESE SPEECHES, AS FAR AS WE COULD FOLLOW, MADE ANY REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES.

10. THE PARADE, WHICH LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF, INCLUDED SOME 85 COMPANIES, OF WHICH 17 WERE MILITARY, PROPERLY SO-CALLED. PARADE WAS OPENED BY 9 COMPANIES OF INFANTRY INCLUDING 3 COMPANIES OF WOMEN. A MIXED COMPANY OF WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL DRESS CARRYING CARBINES CAME NEXT, FOLLOWED BY A COMPANY OF ENGINEERS, A COMPANY OF THE LAO ELECTRIC COMPANY, A COMPANY OF UNIFORMED WOMEN WITH CARBINES, TWO COMPANIES OF MIXED YOUTH, ONE COMPANY CARRYING MACHINE GUNS AND RECOILLESS RIFLES ON LITTERS AT SHOULDER HEIGHT, AND ONE HEAVY WEAPONS COMPANY INCLUDING TWO SCOUT CARS TOWING ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND FOUR TRUCKS MOUNTING FOUR BARRELLED MORTARS. THERE WERE FLOATS REPRESENTING THE NAM NGUM DAM, THE LUMBER INDUSTRIES, THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, TEXTILE MANUFACTURING, FURNITURE MAKING, CIGARETTE MAKING, BREWERY AND SOFT DRINKS PRODUCTION, LAO AVIATION, VARIOUS MINISTRIES, STUDENTS, ATHLETES, ACROBATS AND DANCING GIRLS. ONE COMPANY OF MALE YOUTHS CARRIED A LARGE PHOTO OF LENIN. ONLY OTHER

PHOTOS CARRIED WERE THOSE OF "FOUR HEROES".

11. VARIOUS NEWLY ACCREDITED MEMBERS OF THE DIPLO-MATIC CORPS WERE PRESENT, INCLUDING AMBASSADORS FROM EGYPT, IRAQ, RUMANIA, AND MONGOLAIA. THERE WAS A LARGE CONTINGENT OF NORTH KOREAN "ARTIESTS", MALE AND FEMALE, IN MILITARY UNIFORMS.

12. COMMENT: SOME OF THE LEADING MILITARY UNITS WERE DOING THE "GOOSE STEP". BUT THE EAST GERMAN AMBASSADOR DENIED HAVING ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS. THE ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES, INCLUDING THE PARADE, DEMON-CONFIDENTIAL

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STRATED THE HIGH DEGREE OF ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL OF THE PARTY/GOVERNMENT APPARATUS IN VIENTIANE, ALTHOUGH THE PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURITY ILLUSTRATED THE REGIME'S FIXATION ON THIS SUBJECT. THE TONE OF THE SPEECHES IN REGARD TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS MODERATE COMPARED TO THOSE MADE DURING THE OCTOBER 11, 12 AND 13, 1975, CELEBRATIONS OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE

"DECLARATION OF LAO INDEPENDENCE".
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